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A word to the peasants and Workers of Ukraine

Revolutionary Insurgent Army of Ukraine

March/April 1920

Brother peasants and workers! For more than three years you have been engaged in a struggle with capitalism and thanks to Your efforts. Your steadfastness and energy, You have brought this struggle nearly to a close. The enemies of the revolution have been exhausted by Your blows and You, anticipating victory, got ready to celebrate. You believed that Your unceasing, often unequal, struggle with the enemies of the revolution, would give You a chance to put into practice the free soviet system for which we all were striving. But, brothers, You see who celebrates in Your place. The uninvited rulers are celebrating, the Communist hangmen, who came here in readiness and along open roads which had been cleared with Your blood, the blood of your sons and brothers who make up the revolutionary insurrection. They seized the wealth of the country. Not You, but they, are in charge. You, the peasants and workers, are a support for them in name only; without You they could not call themselves a worker-peasant government, could not be national murderers and hangmen, could not arbitrarily, in the name of party supremacy, tyrannize the people. The name of the

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people gives them this right in everything. And it is only for this that they need You, peasants and workers.

In every other instance You are nothing to them and they certainly do not take Your opinion into consideration. They enslave, draft, command and rule You. They are destroying You. And You, oppressed, patiently bear all the horrors of execution, violence and tyranny committed by the Communist hangmen and which can be eliminated only by Your revolutionary justice, only by Your joint protest — a revolutionary uprising. To this You are called by Your brothers, peasants and workers who, like You, are dying from the bullets of the Red murderers who confiscate cattle, grain and other products by force and send [them] to Russia. They — Your close brothers —, bidding farewell to their own lives, to the whole bright future for which we all strive, urge You to save the revolution, freedom and independence. Remember, brother peasants and workers, that if you do not personally experience total freedom and independence now, You will henceforth be incapable of settling your own fate, you will not forge your own happiness. You will not be masters of the wealth of Your country or the fruits of Your labour.

All this the uninvited rulers — the Communist-Bolshevik newcomers — will do for You. In order to deliver themselves from these uninvited masters and rulers, all the peasantry and all their finest energies must be devoted to the work of convening secret, rural and regional peasant congresses, at which must be arranged and settled the burning questions of the moment, which are raised by the irresponsibility and dictatorship of these bandits. In the interests of the country, in the interests of the working people of Ukraine, let us not permit the country to be totally devastated by these uninvited masters and rulers. There must be no place in Ukraine for them or their hireling-Red murderers, tyrannizers of the people. All the peasants, losing not one day, must organize themselves through their regional congresses. Let us organize in each village and hamlet regional fighting units; let us create a leading battle organ.

Once and for all refuse any help to the Communist hangmen and their base hirelings, refuse both fodder and grain and bread. Workers in their turn, both in the cities and in villages, must refrain from joining the Communist Party, the Chekas, or the food requisitioning detachments; must renounce all participation in Communist institutions. The people of Ukraine must tell the whole world by word and deed: away with murderers and hangmen both white and red! We are moving towards universal good, light and truth, and your violence will not be tolerated.

Long live the international Worker-Peasant Social Revolution!

Death to all white guards and commissars. Death to all hangmen!

Long live the free soviet system!

*Staff of the Revolutionary Insurgent Army of Ukraine
(Makhnovist)*

[March-April, 1920]